

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 AID-20 OMB-01 EB-11

DRC-01 ACDA-19 /149 W

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O P 211016Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8882

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03543

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: BEXP, PFOR, EG, US

SUBJECT: SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE

REF: LONDON 3432; STATE 54440; CAIRO 1414; STATE 55972

1. UPON RECEIPT CAIRO REFTEL MARCH 20, WE APPROACHED FCO OFFICIALS (EGYPTIAN AND CYPRUS DESK OFFICERS) WITH US REQUESTS PER STATE REFTEL. WE ANTICIPATE NO PROBLEMS WITH BRITISH REPLY.

2. IN INFORMAL NAVY-TO-NAVY MEETING AT USNAVEUR WITH RAD MCCAULEY'S PARTY MARCH 20 (PRIOR TO WHICH CAIRO TELEGRAM HAD BEEN RECEIVED) ROYAL NAVY OFFICERS MADE IT CLEAR THEY SAW NO PROBLEMS WITH US REQUESTS. THEY ALSO MADE SUGGESTION THAT BRITISH WORK UNDER ADMIRAL MCCAULEY'S COMMAND, BUT THAT WAY BE FOUND TO INVOLVE EGYPTIANS TOO, PERHAPS THROUGH ACCEPTANCE OF TITULAR OVERALL COMMAND BY AN EGYPTIAN ADMIRAL. MCCAULEY AGREED TO TAKE REQUESTS INTO CONSIDERATION.

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3. PURSUING EGYPTIAN REQUEST (CAIRO'S PARA 5) MCCAULEY

WILL MAKE FIRST VISIT TO CAIRO MARCH 22 (SEE USNAVEUR SEPTTEL). IT IS POSSIBLE HE AND HIS TEAM COULD MEET BRITISH RECONNAISSANCE TEAM BEFORE IT DEPARTS MONDAY OR TUESDAY. RN OFFICIALS BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE USEFUL FROM TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW.

4. INFORMAL FCO ESTIMATE TO US IS THAT HMG AGREEMENT TO OUR USE OF CYPRUS SBA AT AKROTIRI, AS REQUESTED, IS LIKELY TO BE GIVEN BY WEEKEND OR EARLY NEXT WEEK. IN THIS CONNECTION, FCO OFFICIALS WERE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT GOE IN THE PERSON OF FONMIN FAHMY HAD NOT OBJECTED TO BRITISH PARTICIPATION INCLUDING SOME LOGISTIC SUPPORT FROM CYPRUS SBA.

5. BRITISH HAVE NOTED OUR PREFERENCE FOR COORDINATING PRIMARILY IN WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, THIS PRESENTS SOME TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES TO ROYAL NAVY AND, MORE IMPORTANT, BRITISH WONDER IF IT ADEQUATELY TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION EGYPTIAN SENSITIVITIES. AS EXPRESSED TO US SO FAR ONLY INFORMALLY, BRITISH PREFERENCE WOULD BE FOR WORKING COORDINATION TO BE ON THE SPOT IN EGYPT, WITH BOTH WASHINGTON AND LONDON AS BACKSTOPS.

6. RECOMMENDED ACTION: IN VIEW OF ABOVE WE RECOMMEND THAT (1) FORMALIZED COORDINATION BE ESTABLISHED PRIMARILY IN CAIRO, WITH LONDON AND WASHINGTON SUPPORTING AS REQUIRED, AND (2) THOUGHT BE GIVEN TO WAYS IN WHICH TO ASSUAGE EGYPTIAN SENSITIVITIES (ALSO REPORTED CAIRO REFTTEL). FROM INFO GLEANED OVER PAST WEEK, WE HAVE IMPRESSION EGYPTIANS HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN TO BRITISH ABOUT DESIRES TO ESTABLISH OVERALL COORDINATING COMMAND UNDER EGYPTIAN AEGIS. WE ASSUME THESE WISHES WILL COME OUT WHEN ADMIRAL MCCAULEY TALKS TO EGYPTIANS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPLOSIVES, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, INTERNATIONAL CANALS, ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), DREDGING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON03543
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740059-0988
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740326/aaaaayjb.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LONDON 3432; STATE 54440; CAIRO 1414, ; STATE 55972
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUN 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <03 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE
TAGS: BEXP, PFOR, EG, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005